

Expert Group Meeting on science and SDGs, New York, March 2013

Strengthening the science-policy interface
Global Sustainable Development Report

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High-level guidance

- UNCSO (“Rio+20”) outcome document
“85. *The high-level forum could: [...] (k) **Strengthen the science-policy** interface through review of documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a **global sustainable development report**, building on existing assessments;*”
- Secretary General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (report section V.D)
- Revised UN work programme/budget



Role of science?

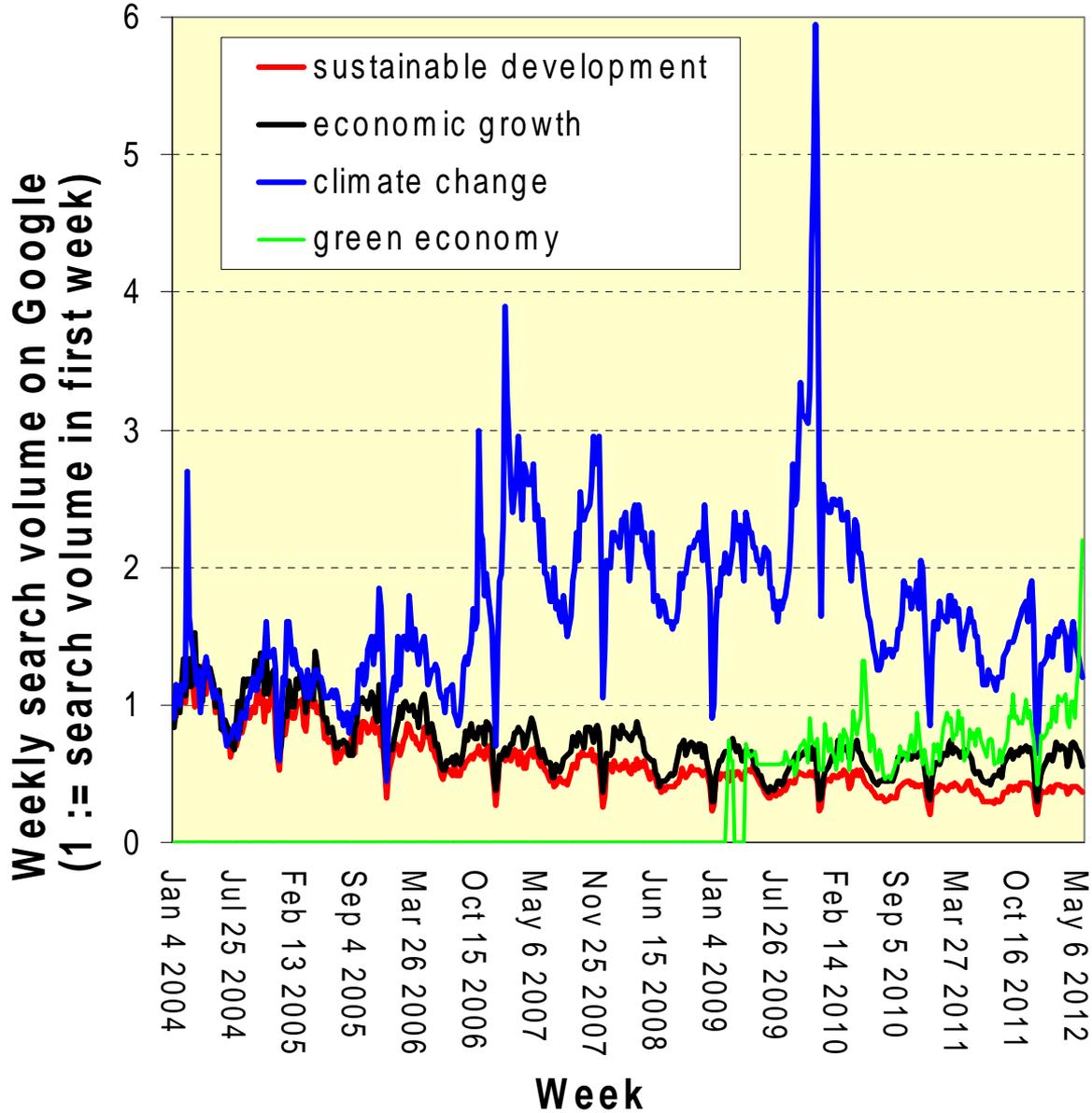
Different worlds

	Science	Policy
Goals	Knowledge	Action, policy
Results	Publications	Action, policy.
Quality control	Peer review	Political and societal support
Knowledge	Fragmented, abstract	Integrated, concrete
Time frame	Long term	Short term

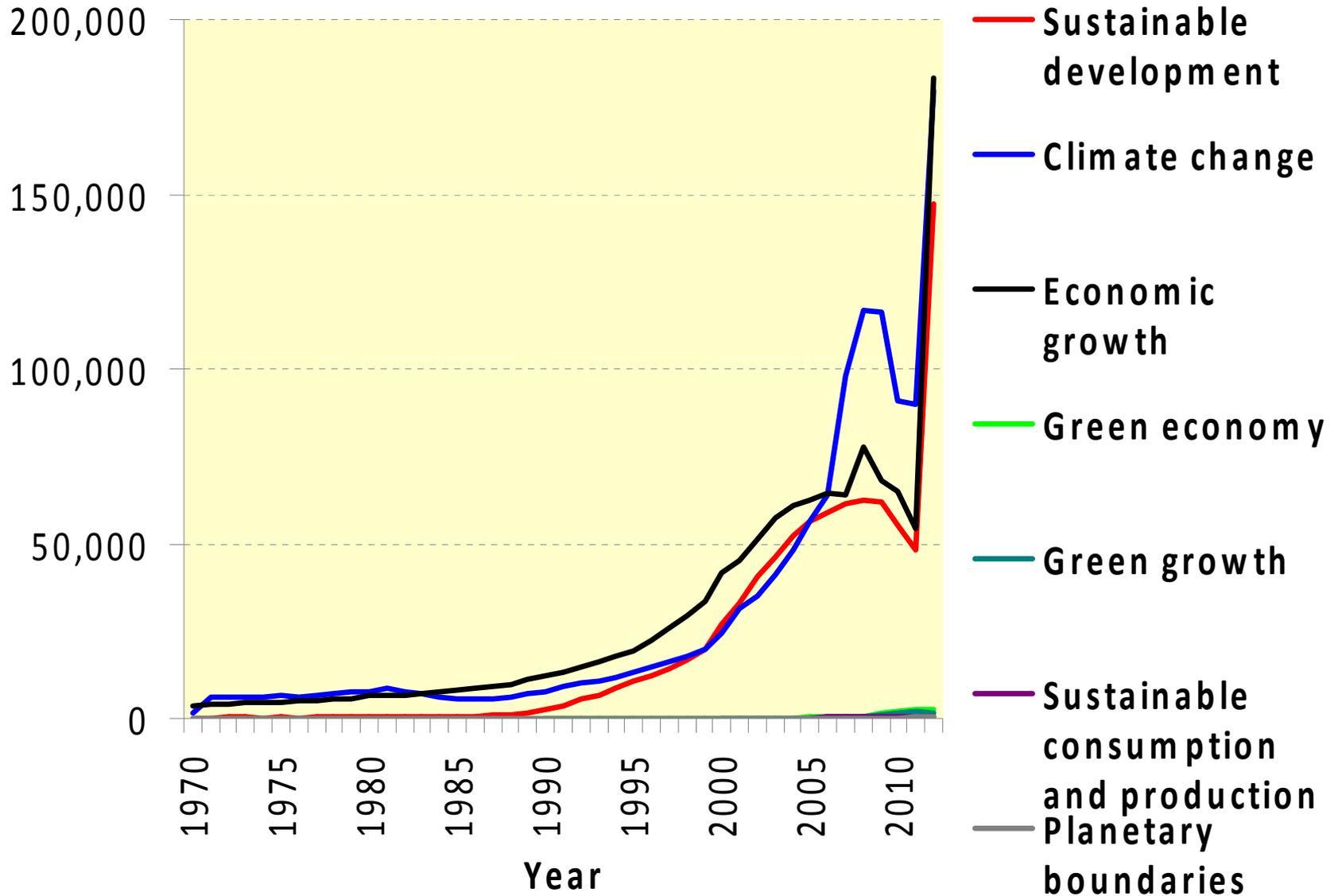
Different knowledge interests

Science	Policy/Politics
“Truth”	Power
Value-free	Normative
In-depth study	Quick results
Reliable	Feasible
Detailed	Headlines
Causes	Solutions
Peer review	Support
Valid	acceptable

Is sustainable development dead?



Number of articles in Google Scholar indicating ultimate objective



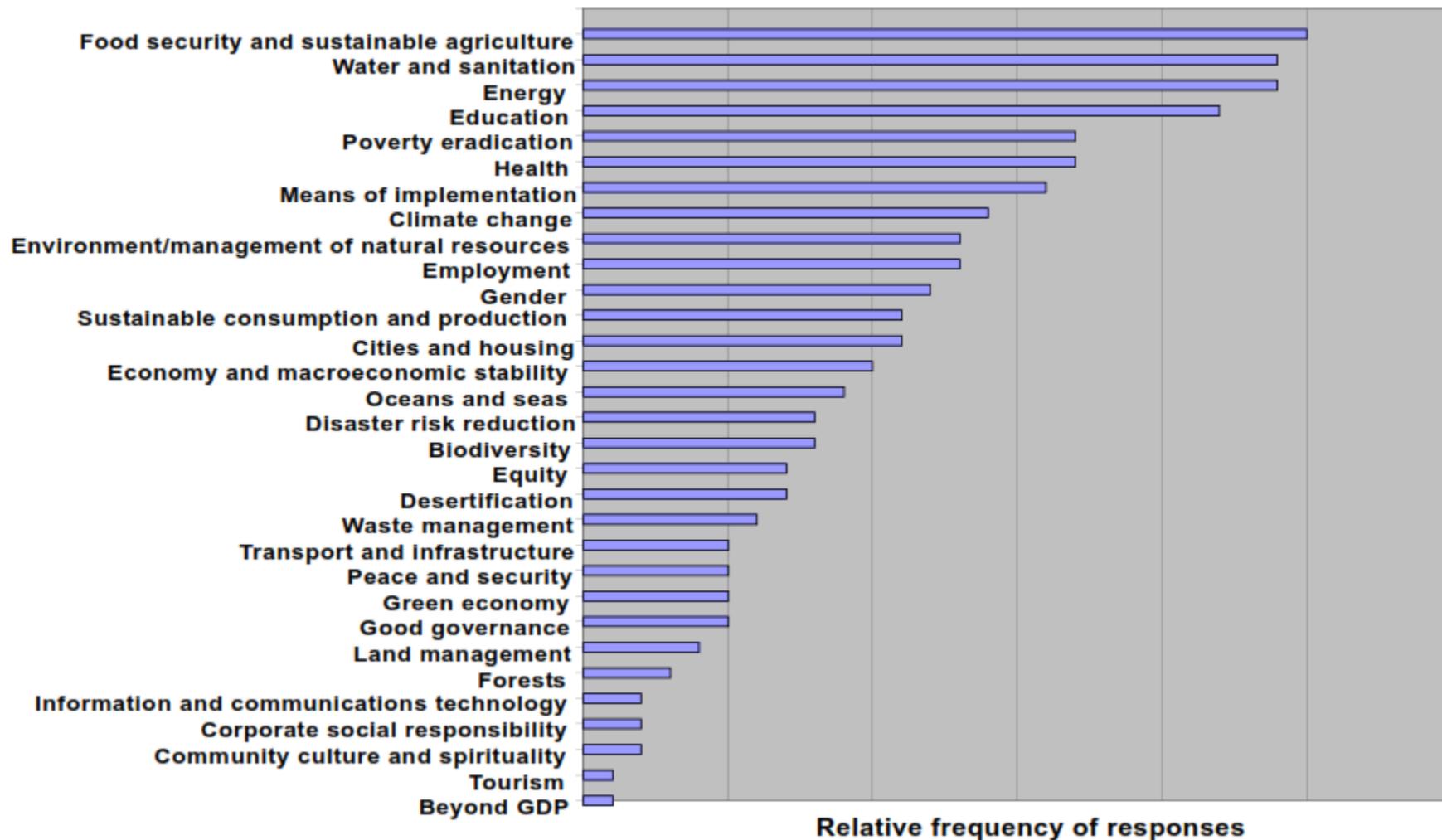
What is sustainable development?

Values	What is to be sustained?	For how long?	What is to be developed?
Freedom Equality Solidarity Tolerance Respect for nature Shared responsibility	(S1) Nature Earth Biodiversity Ecosystems	5, 10, 20, 50, 100 years, forever, etc.	(D1) People Child survival Life expectancy Education Equity, Equal opportunity Human security
	(S2) Life support Ecosystem services Resources Environment		(D2) Economy Wealth Productive sectors Consumption
	(S3) Community Peace Cultures Groups Places		(D3) Society Institutions Social capital States Regions

Source: Kates et al. (2005)

What SDGs do Governments want?

Sustainable development goals questionnaire responses:
Priority areas mentioned by Member States



Source: SG report A/67/634, Dec. 2012

Organizing the range of perspectives

What it represents

Ultimate goal

Overall approach – visions (ends)

Goals and strategies (means)

Policies, programmes and action plan

Implementation

Substantive starting point

- SD21 process and project studies
- SD issue briefs, official submissions and other inputs for Rio+20
- Sustainable development solutions network
- Planet Future Earth Initiative
- Many international, scientific SD assessments (IPCC, IPBES, GEA, etc.)
- Science-policy briefs on sustainable development by Academies of Science and others
- Institutional reports (UN and non-UN)
- Government-sponsored SD research

Global Sustainable Development Report 2013

- Assessments for sustainable development
- Review of progress
- Future pathways/stories
- Making and measuring progress
- Special theme: The climate-land-energy-water-development nexus
- Policy issues for consideration

Vancouver (June)

Crowdsourcing + surveys +
New York (27-29 May)

Vienna (6-7 May)

World Bank?

Stockholm
(16-17 May)

Collaborative team

Bangkok (25-26 April)

Port of Spain (June)

Other regions and groups of countries

Launch events

Products

- Reports
 - SG's report for High-level Political Forum
 - Many in-depth background reports
 - Database of briefs of assessments
 - Synthesis chapters (“glossy”, attributions)
- Collaborative team
 - Permanent entry point for scientists to SD policy debate at UN
 - Collaborative Semantic Website
 - Open source, open data, open assumptions
 - Global Scenario Modelling Forum?

What kind of solutions?

- 1) Need for minimum consensus on the way forward
- 2) Needs to “add-up” globally
- 3) Need for equity
- 4) Need for institutions that are up to the challenge

*Perversity, futility and jeopardy arguments
(A. Hirschman)*

**Thank you. Are you
interested to get
involved?**

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